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## ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE HARVARD MUSICAL ASSOCIATION,

August 28th, 1841. By JOHN S. DWIGHT.

*Gentlemen of the Harvard Musical Association,  
and Friends of Music :—*

Called upon, at the eleventh hour, to speak in the absence of another, that our anniversary may not want a voice, I cheerfully comply, though it be only to congratulate you on the brightening omens of our cause. Do we not read them in each other's faces, in the spirit which brings you here demanding such a voice, and not content to go away from Alma Mater's annual festival without lingering to place a crown upon the statue of Music, after Learning, Philosophy, Poetry, Religion, convivial Feeling, each, in turn, has had its honor? There is no time to waste in apologies; I try to surrender myself in trustful obedience to the genius of the hour, hoping that it may be given me, out of the heart and impulse of our common feeling, to say some things, not altogether superfluous or foreign to our purpose, concerning Music. A multitude of topics rush upon the mind, which we must take up unceremoniously in the order of their coming, trusting that all the details of our rambling discourse

will be so steeped in a devout love for music, in a desire to penetrate to its essence and to do the art just honor, as to give them a unity of spirit, if not of form. All that is said will tend, I trust, to show the dignity of music, as an art, and to establish the power, so often claimed for it, of elevating the feelings and ennobling social life.

This, then, is what we have to discuss : *The true office and dignity of Music.* Alas ! that we are obliged to discuss it ; to bring our feeble speech to the aid of a language in itself so much more glorious ! to try to heighten its eloquence by thoughts and words, when thought and speech leave off where *it* begins, just as the face of the earth grows dark as soon as the stars begin to shine ! to interpret music, which is the language of heaven, the language of the Infinite, by words, which are the language of the Finite ! It is like going out with a candle to see the moon. How much better, if music could unseal her own lips here, and let her spell come over us in some sublime chorus of Handel, or symphony of Beethoven, or were it only some humble, heartfelt national melody ! Then should she, like wisdom, be " justified of her children."

But there are many things, with us, to weaken the force of any appeal which Music, through the performance of her sublimest works, might make. To say nothing of our comparatively few opportunities of hearing music of the highest kind, and worthily performed ; of the neglect of a general cultivation not only of a taste but even of an ear for music ; there is the want of sufficient reverence for music as an art, which prevents and makes impossible any full and effectual manifestation of its power among us. This low appreciation of the dignity of music as an art, is due, in a great measure, to the current distinction between *sacred* and *secular* music. Not that there is no distinction ; not that the same strains are equally suited to the church and to the ball-room ; or that it is good taste or good sense to apply the words of a hymn to the melody of "Auld Lang Syne," or "Bonnie Doon." But the nature of the distinction, such as it is, is wrongly indicated by these words ; it is made by far too wide, more with reference to accidental associations, customs and circumstances connected with music, than to its own essential meaning. This operates in two ways to the disadvantage of the art. All that it calls secular or profane it virtually excommunicates thereby from the circle of pure and holy influences, identifies it with whatever is trivial and low, and makes it seem a merit and a mark of piety, at least of prudence, to be innocent of it, and ignore

it altogether, or, at the most, "indulge" in it sparingly, as we do in other recreations which the weakness of the flesh will have. So all time spent in it becomes indulgence, not devotion,—a wandering away from the earnest business of life, and not acquaintance with a higher life. It is an amusement, not a study; it will do to while away an idle hour with, to refresh a weary mind, or extract the sting of sorrow; it well supplies the place of more dangerous excitements, like the bottle and the gambling table; but we may not enter into it seriously; it cannot enrich, ennoble, purify and perfect the powers and sensibilities of man, and make him more a man, as poetry and science do, to which we hold the sacrifice of a life but cheap. At most it belongs to the ornamental, not to the indispensable. It occupies a place in neither of the recognised departments of Labor, of Learning, or of Wisdom; but is consigned, with little ceremony, to that uncertain limbo, never accurately surveyed, where men run to and fro irresponsible, called Taste. On the other hand, by calling certain music, and that only, *sacred*, we give to all, so named, an arbitrary worth which makes its intrinsic merit less consulted; we limit its natural freedom of expression, and reduce it to a form, a ceremony, till it becomes monotonous and dull, and is cherished more from veneration and old habit, than from any love of its own beauty. When "church music" is mentioned, all the stress seems laid upon "church," and little upon "music." The whole significance and charm of the latter is resolved into association, and music, as such, becomes a negative thing, the merest robe or varnish to a hallowed form. Not loved and cherished for its own sake, but only as a customary part of a ritual, it comes to have less and less of music in it; to have no life of its own, but only such as it borrows from the occasion for which it is used, through the instrumentality of that marvellous agent, called Association, which seems, to hear some talk about it, to have the chemical faculty not only of compounding, but also of creating substances. Thus is Music clipped at both ends; secular and sacred run away in opposite directions, each with its half, and Art is left a minus quantity in the middle. That is to say; the music of the church, in its dread of the secular spirit, grows lifeless, dull and cold; the music of the parlor and the street, in its dread of solemn dullness, grows altogether trivial and gay; while true music, conceived in the exalted sense of art, is tolerated in neither place, since it falls under neither head. It is rejected from the church, because, being confounded under one sweeping classifica-

tion with every thing secular, a something not quite sacred seems to appertain to it, and it is unpopular with the multitude, who seek to be amused, but never dream of studying and laying to their heart the deep sense of a symphony, a sonata, or an overture, as they would that of a poem, or a discourse.

Yet as much soul, as much energy of genius, as much depth and earnestness of life, as much fullness of meaning and inexhaustible beauty, may go into the composition of the music, as into that of the poem. All this, however, is left to the enjoyment of a very select few. The whole inner world of a Beethoven, a Weber, a Mozart, all that heaven has communicated to those gifted spirits, and, through them, to the world, in the mysterious language of their art, is a secret with these few,—their undisputed and unenvied enjoyment and prerogative;—yet a painful enjoyment, which they burn with hopeless longing to share with others. For the best and truest music, that which stirs the deepest chords in us, and wakes the strongest yearnings after a better world of harmony and peace; that which fills the mind, while heard, with “sober certainty of waking bliss,” and, as its sound dies away upon the ear, leaves its soul behind to mingle with our aspirations, was written neither for purposes professedly sacred, nor for amusement; but it was the spontaneous utterance of feeling, as much as any poem; a gushing up as of a fountain without a purpose. Sometimes it happened to push up within the precincts of the church, sometimes in the beaten thoroughfares of the world, sometimes in the theatre of pleasure: that is, sometimes it was written to sacred words, a psalm, or a mass, in the devout mood of the author; sometimes for money, to keep him from starving; sometimes it took the shape of the light and elegant waltz, or dazzling divertimento, or entertaining opera, where often it happened that the production proved vastly greater than the occasion, the means far nobler than the end they served; as is the case with the opera “Don Juan,” by Mozart, and with the “waltzes” of Beethoven, which latter remind us of no dance, unless it be the dances of the heavenly systems, in their sublime career through space,—such their outward form and movement might suggest; but really, they are moral tragedies and prayers and outgushings of gratitude unutterable by speech;—they are the happiest and most feeling expression of the deep and earnest life there was burning in that man, and which burns on yet, we trust, in purer spheres than this, where he seemed out of place. But this is wandering. What I want to illustrate, is,

that music is the child of nature, and does not work to order, nor in any traces; that the whole merit, the whole meaning, the whole moral influence of her works, is often altogether independent of the outward occasions which called them into being. Their spirit and essential tendency are not to be confounded with the mere historical circumstances attending their origin and subsequent performance; many pieces are nominally theatrical, nominally sacred, but naturally and really mean more than any name or place can designate. The occasion might call, but the song or the sonata would not come, unless it were already *in being*: that is, unless the inmost life of the composer, all the spiritual juices of his nature, were tending towards such fruit. And often, when an occasion called, the composer answered, not in such strains as were merely called for, but in the choicest life-blood of his soul, in the very heaven-distilled wine of genius, in the readiest natural language of what was in him. If an opera, or a dance, or a mass were ordered, he wrote it in the way of business; but as regards the rest, he wrote not merely what was ordered, but what his own heart loved to sing; for the terms of the order covered only the form, and not the spirit of the thing to be produced, which was for those who had ears to hear and hearts to feel. The works of a man of genius, in any department, are not occasional; or if the works are, the soul of the works is not. Occasions only shake the tree, and the fruit, already ripened, falls. Works of art make their appearance on occasions; but their inward conception and growth, their spirit, style and tone, are results of the whole character and nature of the man; and by the music we know the man, "what manner of spirit he was of." Let not the bigot call it secular, because not written for church service, when, nevertheless, it may all thrill and tremble with the natural, the unprofessed religion of the heart; when it may be a full heart's fond confession, heard and blessed in heaven. And let not the flippant pleasure-hunter, or unideal utilitarian, relaxing from his drudgery awhile, call it artificial, scientific, dull and dirge-like, because it came out of a mind more earnest than his own. But let each, while he cultivates a deep and true life in himself, strive rather to enter into the spirit of the great works of the masters in music, to appreciate them as art, as flowers and fruits of soul, and not as manufactures; and he will find their influence will be to raise him equally above bigotry and above frivolity, to hallow pleasure and to naturalize religion.

The history of music is full of the strangest inconsistencies; it

brings the little and the great together, in close proximity ; and often couples the spectacle of sublime and godlike capacity with the most humiliating weaknesses ; so much so that it argues no narrowness in any one, if he happen to share the unfavorable prejudice with which many look upon all music and composers of music, not expressly dedicated to religion. No wonder he so feels, when he reads for what trivial and low occasions some of the greatest masters labored, to what unhallowed and unwholesome marts they carried their productions, to what silly or licentious words some of the noblest efforts in the opera were set, what unspiritual and merely taking subjects were chosen for many a sublime orchestral work, and with what business-like despatch, with more thought of money than of God, much of the sublimest chant and choral music was thrown off. This I will not here attempt to explain, or to reconcile with what has thus far been advanced concerning the dignity of the art. The same phenomenon will meet us again when we shall have attained to a higher point of view of the whole matter, and then, perhaps, the explanation will come with it. For the present, I only repeat the general proposition, that music has a meaning in itself, independently of any occasion for which it may be written, or of any principle of association. Much of the most popular church music, doubtless, was composed with little conscious devotion, but in the way of business, because the church, kind patroness of all the arts, opened the most inviting market to the composer. This holds most true, unluckily, of the noblest forms of sacred music, such as we hear most seldom in our land, such as are only known to the cathedral. While much of the plainer psalmody which we do hear, and which piety sanctions, which the mere grammarian in music can manufacture, and any body can perform, is dull and monotonous and uninspiring, and does not reach the heart. It is practised more because it is a branch of public worship and associated with the church, than because it is music ; it is loved more for old association's sake than for its intrinsic merit ; more because it is *the* music of our childhood and of our fathers, and the best that ever greeted our ears, than because it has the warmth and glow of genius. Compare it with a Scotch song, or with those so called "waltzes" of Beethoven, and which, (taking into account only the intrinsic power of the music,) moves the soul most deeply ? On the other hand, how much of the music which we call secular, is all instinct with the sublimest, tenderest, holiest sentiment ? Are not, for instance, some of the adagio movements, scat-

tered through the instrumental works of Beethoven, almost the very essence of prayer? — not formal prayer, I grant, but earnest, deep, unspeakable aspiration? Is not his music pervaded by such prayer? When we hear it and are so moved by it, what account can we give of it, except to say that in it all our deepest yearnings are expressed; that while our ears drink in its gliding, gushing, crowded harmonies, every deepest sentiment within us, which has never felt at home in this world of the finite and the artificial, this world of narrowness and ignorance and strife, is visited with a sweet home-sympathy, with an assurance that there is that in the world that corresponds to it? Yes! we have faith in our best thoughts, our secret hopes, when they come back to us in music. Does not his harmony affect us, just as when we look up to the stars in a clear night, and are filled with awe, as well as with unspeakable longing, and with a consciousness that our true home's not here, — that there is another and an unseen world which only the heart knoweth, and which the pure in heart shall enter, though they are not of the successful ones after the world's way? Or rather, (to make our comparison more characteristic of that individual composer,) we will suppose it *not* a clear night, but one in which the sublimity is heightened by masses of black clouds, moving and drifting over the sky, while the moon and the stars look out so true and calm between, or seem to sail and glide in and out from their dark havens, — clouds and storms, as of a restless, heaven-storming, Titan soul, with sweetest vistas of clear heaven beyond, — clouds and storms of earnest aspiration, it may be of momentary doubt, relieving the to us monotonously clear, blue, boundless firmament of Faith. If "sacred" means elevating, purifying, love and faith-inspiring, then nearly all the secular works of the masters are sacred. They shed a sacred influence over our minds; they make us conscious of new worlds within us; they bring out the glow and grandeur of the world around us; they open a new communication between our hearts and nature, and assert the present Deity, without name, without creed. Many of you are familiar with the operatic music of Bellini. What purity, what tenderness, what depth of love and filial piety breathe in every strain, in every little symphony between the airs! I have sat under his spell, and then gone forth and seen this old dull world of ours, (which only our own dullness makes dull,) suddenly light up and wear a new aspect, all alive with beauty, with friendliness and sympathy, for *me*, as if the smile of a Father was what its beauty meant. When I think of this,

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and when I think what spiritual nourishment I have drunk from the secular piano-forte, from the orchestra, or from the midnight serenade, I feel that music is wronged by these words "secular" and "sacred." In proportion to the depth and tenderness of my gratitude to such a benefactress, to whom I owe so much, who has infused, as it were, a new element all around me and under me, and buoyed my life up above worldliness and doubt and fear, is my sensitiveness to such language. It pains me to hear the distinction alluded to; not because it is not good enough in its place, but because it conveys so many misconstructions, because it wrongs and degrades a noble art, and because it discovers, on the part of the lover of music, a poor and low conception of his art, as of a thing which needs to be sanctified. Does not many a true lover of music share this feeling with me?

So much in justice to actual impressions received in hearing music now and then. The experience is irreconcilable with the meaning conveyed by the indiscriminate use of the terms "secular" and "sacred." Let us now go further, and seek a deeper reason in the philosophy of the thing. Let us try to penetrate, though with feeble force of thought, into the inmost nature and essence of music,—consider what it stands for, what its final cause, and contemplate it in its highest and truest office, as one of the natural influences by which we live and grow and accomplish our great destiny. I hazard the assertion, that *music is all sacred*; that music in its essence, in its purity, when it flows from the genuine fount of art in the composer's soul, when it is the inspiration of his genius, and not a manufactured imitation, when it comes unforced, unbidden from the heart, is a divine minister to the wants of the soul. I know it is often put to low uses; it is often composed without inspiration, like doggerel poetry, patched up out of floating common-places, and only conformed to the rules of harmony and rhythm,—the body without the soul of music. Because in this, as in all arts, where there is one genius, there are a hundred imitators, where one has the spirit, a hundred have the knack of producing the form. But music which is original, which rises to the dignity of art, is holy; it cannot profane any mind, or any place; it can be profaned by the levity, yes, and by the unsent, feigned solemnity with which it is performed or written; but it came itself from heaven. To me, music stands for the highest outward symbol of what is most deep and holy, and most remotely to be realized in the soul of man. It is a sort of *Holy Writ*; a prophecy of

what life is to be ; the language of our presentiments ; the rainbow of promise translated out of seeing into hearing. This may sound extravagant and sentimental. But no less could I say in justice to sincere experience ; it is confession which one, " smit with the love of sacred song," is bound to make, and not a play of fancy, which he might withhold.

I have already spoken several times incidentally of music as Art, as Language, and as Prophecy. A few words now on each of these heads.

1. Not every musician is an artist. Skill, tact, science, fall short of this high distinction. Yet we confound the eternal work of art and the merest superficiality, composed by rule or memory, under one term, music. Let it be understood that, in all our high claims for music thus far, we have had reference, not to the mere medium of expression, to the agreeable combinations and successions of sound, which we call music, but to the *music from the soul*, expressing itself through that medium, through those melodies and harmonies ; — not to the mere verbal and rhythmical dress of the poem, but to the poetry of it. Amongst all the numberless varieties of things which may be played and sung, there is much which claims to be music for a greater reason than that it is capable of being played and sung ; for the reason, namely, that it is full of soul and meaning, and comes from an equal inspiration with the highest works of art, in painting, sculpture, or poetry. A true work of music stands for as much life, and is as much the word of a great soul, as is an *Iliad*, or a *Paradise Lost*. But poetry, which is no poetry, we can call rhyme ; eloquence, which is uninspired, we can call speech ; music we must call music, whether it be a jig, or a *Messiah* ; and there is no term to distinguish among mere melodies and harmonies conformed to rule, those which also contain meaning, originality, and the spirit of true art. A great many compositions bear the same relation to the high art-standard of music which the rhymed commonplaces in the corner of a newspaper bear to poetry, or which mere speech bears to eloquence.

What is art? is not easily answered. Yet the word is understood, where its presence has been felt, by any one who has felt the difference between an Apollo Belvidere and a tolerably skilful statue from some clever hand. In each of its departments there are several stages or approximations to pure art. Thus, among writers, there is first the one who has merely mastered the language, and who lets

the language or the current literature do his thinking for him. Then there is the one who writes skilfully to some purpose, who knows how to adapt means to an end, to prove, to persuade, to please; such is the popular speaker, lecturer, essayist, satirist, or didactic poet. Then there is the *artist* who creates, who produces a poem or a thought for its own sake, because he is full of it and must give it utterance; it is his own genius which he writes out, and he moulds the language to his use; it is to serve no special end; his work is an end in itself; it has not merely a relative, but an absolute existence; you do not ask *why* it is, but only *what* it is. The first is acquirement; the second, talent; the third, genius. So the painter or sculptor, who succeeds in getting a faithful likeness of a head, is no artist, but only one who has acquired the use of the tools of art. Above him is the skilful designer, who gives you representations or illustrations of historical scenes, or natural objects, or his own fancies. He has talent, yet he is not the artist. The artist, the man of genius, creates. He borrows both his materials and his subject, to be sure; but they are the least part of his picture or his group. He finds a subject in the worship of Apollo, the story of Laocoon, the landscape before him; but that is only the web into which he must put the woof. Talent uses paint and marble to represent a storm. Genius first translates the storm into a painting, and then uses them both to represent its own ideal,—makes both serve its master thought. The works of talent surprise us, and make us think chiefly of the power and skill displayed in their execution. The works of genius overpower us, transport us, fill us with their own spirit, haunt us wherever we go, suggest to us infinitely more than we see, and come over us like the whole heavens, showing us not one thing, but the harmony of all things. The reason for their being lies not in the subject, or passage of history, which they illustrate; we do not have to go out of themselves for it. All traces of the old mythology might be lost; and the Apollo, without a name or clue to its story, would mean as much as it now means. So in Music. With those who work in tones, as with those who work in stone, or brass, or colors, there are all grades of excellence, from manufacture up to art. Do not confound the mechanical *composer* or *maker-up* with the creator or artist, whose music is the exponent and beautiful revelation of his life. Believe, too, that in music itself there is something greater than any thing which it undertakes to illustrate or adorn; that art is greater than its subjects or occasions;

that music has something more to do than to clothe a given thought, or imitate a given scene or story. Its nobler mission is to publish its own secret; to give you, not storms, moonlight, battles, hymns, tragedies, recollections; for those you have, (in the original, which is better than the copy,) but to give you *music*, something which concerns you intimately, and which is not published in any other way. A great deal is said about imitations of nature, or stories of human life, running through music; and there is great joy among the disciples when some such hint, by way of explanation of his meaning in some piece, admired we know not why, can be got from the great master. Not content with enjoying it as music, we ask to have it repeated to us as thought; which is like asking to have the condition of the blessed in another world made visible to eye and ear in this world. To hear music truly, you enter the realm of music, and feel as if all the world was music, and nothing but music; you forget your former state; histories, persons, scenes, thoughts, words, are foreign here; it is not their element; the most you can do will be to say, like Paul, "I know not whether I was in the body or out of the body." Return to the matter-of-fact life of the senses, and ask the composer what he meant, and either he will give no answer, or one that will sadly disappoint you. Importuned for an answer of some sort, he will tell you of any fly of circumstance that chanced to light upon his paper while he wrote, of any stray thoughts, or momentary consciousness of things in the outward world, which chequered the pure sky of his rhapsody at his piano. Ask the clear running stream its meaning; you will recognise the chance reflections of objects flitting over it, objects beautiful, fanciful, grotesque or low; but they are not the running stream. So in art; you may see all things, but not itself. Imitative music is sometimes wonderful, but it is not the highest. Music is essentially subjective, and mere musical imitations of objects are a prostitution of the art. They are not art, any more than the Daguerreotype is art. Curiosity is excited to hear the *Battle of Prague*, in Neukomm's Fantasia, on the organ, representing a concert on lake interrupted by a storm. Such things can hardly entertain the lover of true music twice. Even Haydn's "*Creation*," by its literal imitations, sacrifices too much to effect. Schindler, the biographer of Beethoven, gives us an explanation, from the master himself, of one of his sonatas, and traces minutely through, from phrase to phrase, two answering parts, one pleading, the other angrily refusing, as if it were a quarrel

between two lovers, or between husband and wife. But from the lips of Beethoven himself, I would not accept so low an explanation. He told what he could, perhaps, but left the most untold, or never thought how much he meant. Could the story affect us like the music ? Of no vulgar nature must the conflict be, which could be carried up into the pure realm of art and made immortal ; — a conflict of ideal spirits, or of principles, or say, of the individual soul with Destiny, the music, the meanwhile, harmonizing all their wild, impatient outbreaks, that they may not go beyond the law of beauty, and thus predicting the sure and happy reconciliation. On another occasion, being asked the key to a sonata, he replied, " Read Shakespeare's *Tempest*." But he did not say, " It is a musical translation of the *Tempest*." In vain will you endeavor to trace the story through it, save as you trace a vague and fanciful connection between the accidental figures in the veins of mahogany or marble. You cannot say, this represents the storm ; this, the scolding of the boatswain ; this, the uplifting of the magician's wand ; this, the pleading sympathy of Miranda ; and this, the sudden flight and apparition of the tricksy Ariel. All that, done ever so well, would have been but a musical curiosity. Our artist worked for no such end in this sonata. It was his own wild and glorious mood which he would utter and preserve in the immortal form of art. Would you know what wrought him up to such a pitch of feeling ? " Read Shakspeare's *Tempest*." These strains are but the audible vibrations of his soul under the spell of that wild tale of elemental discord, wonder, love, and all-subduing justice ; his rapturous response to the tones of another master mind. While you listen, your fancy will roam at large and recognise, *ad libitum*, full many a well-known face, — Ariels, and beautiful, or grotesque spirits without number, " music i' the air," Calibans and growling thunder, the whole isle shaking, waves roaring, clouds blackening, flames flickering on the tops of masts, soft sighs of love and compassion, and deep tones of fatherly wisdom, — but all indefinite, all in the vague, evanescent interminglings and successions of a dream. No regular synopsis could be given. Such is the difference between Art and Skill. And thus is Music, as an art, no parasite, living upon other arts, but endowed with an independent being, and entrusted with its own peculiar mission.

2. After what has now been said, it will be safe to speak of music as Language. It is a language. It is so independently of words. Indeed, all progress in musical taste brings with it a growing prefer-

ence for instrumental music over vocal. It compromises something of its own peculiar eloquence to even the most judicious union with poetry. I call it the language of *natural religion*, and class it among the evidences of our religious nature. It is the natural language of emotions and aspirations, which imply the existence of more than is seen, which press towards the heart of all things, and cannot bear to believe that nature is lifeless. There is most music where there is most of this spontaneous spirituality, where men are most conscious of the unseen world ; — not where men have most strictness of faith or observance, but where they live practically above what is narrowly called the Practical, and seem to know that they have souls to satisfy as well as bodies. It is the most intimate of languages. Two Germans, meeting after a long separation, would hardly feel that they had conversed, until they had made music together ; it would seem a cold meeting to them without that. And there is a certain rude *Aeolian-harp* music running through Speech, which gives us our most intimate knowledge of one another. We learn more of a person from the tones in which he says a thing, than from the thing he says. His words convey a special meaning ; but the tones and modulations, the rhythm and quality of his voice, convey the whole spirit and character of the man to us. His words tell us what he means now ; his tones, what he means always, — not merely the meaning of what he is now stating, but the meaning of *him*. You need only catch the tones of a speaker in another room, where you can neither see him nor distinguish his words, to know just how refined, how calm, how generous he is, and whether he is a hopeful child and a believer, or a skeptical and politic man of tact.

3. And now for the Prophetic character of Music. I have called it the language of our presentiments. The communion which we enjoy through it is an intimation of the higher life into which this progressive organization of ours will unfold itself. Nay, it is itself, for the time being, the "substance of things hoped for." It warns us of that essential harmony of things which our artificial ways disturb, and sings to us, for our comfort, that the broken fragments of the kingdom of heaven, as they lie about us here in the chaos of sin and strife, shall one day rise together into a fair, harmonious whole. In other words, music predicts the final reconciliation of the sacred and the secular in all things, the doing away of that distinction by the return of all things to their primitive and holy uses. And wherever true music, that reconciliation *has*, for the time being, taken

place. For music hallows even trivial occasions. It ennobles all it touches. It idealizes even the dance, and exalts it to the dignity of the dance of Miriam on the shore of the Red Sea. Pleasure is less dangerous, less sensual, less trivial, when music intellectualizes it. The believer in depravity, the strictest ascetic, will allow that "to the pure all things are pure," *were we* only pure. Now it is conceivable that the week might be as holy as the Sabbath; that man might glorify God with the labor of his hands, as well as in the sanctuary; that his talk with his brother might be communion; and that gayety and dancing might be, not a perversion and a wicked waste of life, but the innocent and trustful joy of grateful children beneath a Father's smile. So far as the legitimate influence of music goes, this thing is realized. The theatre is a better place when music from the heart is heard there. The dance becomes the poetry of motion when the music is not a mere tickler of the sense, but a graceful and exquisite work of art, speaking to the soul, like some of the happiest waltzes of Strauss or Laenner. A tender melancholy, as of moonlight and the flow of waters, comes over one sometimes in the mere music of the waltz. Does it not show how all things must be lifted up, and restored at last to their original sacredness? how this whole life, without losing any of its naturalness, must become a temple and an act of worship? And if musicians, the inspired masters of that guild, do degrade their genius to low subjects, give trivial names to their sublimest pieces, and herd with the profane, it proves only a false state of things, and that there ought not to be any profane. In *their* world, in their mysterious realm of music, which is their atmosphere, their life, and in which they are glorious, there is no secular, no sacred; all is soul and beauty; all is liberal, disinterested, pure; no doubt, no dogmatism can enter there; no selfishness, no grossness. Those are narrow, private faults, and music is a universal language. Those belong to men as they are; music belongs to humanity in its original. And he, who has most deeply felt the power of music, is most humbled by the thought of the lost brightness of his own original, and most yearns to realize the promised reconciliation of which I have spoken. A true lover of music must be in some sense a "perfectionist."

Yes! in music, if true to itself, there is nothing profane. It comes from above. It is a stray, reflected light from heaven, glancing about, here and there, over all the surface and the walls of this our earthly life, entering without fear each dull and vulgar haunt,—a

sort of revelation to the vulgar, that there is a capacity in him for something more. When shall we move as freely and as beneficently among our brethren, high or low, pure or tainted, and in all places, whether consecrated or not, as this heavenly benefactress moves among us? Does she not teach us that this divorce of secular from sacred, of nature from religion, is all wrong? Wherever a holy spirit comes, whether it comes in the shape of a good man, or of hallowed associations which hang around a church, or of a true strain of careless, wandering music, such as sometimes falls, like that stray sunbeam, into holes where only vice frequents, there, so long as it lingers, is the place made holy. All things may be exalted in this way. Have you not observed the effect of moonlight, how, with magic wand, she transforms the old white house into a marble palace, hides all the obtrusive and discordant features of the scene, and, with vague and delicate shading, brings out all its ideal beauty, turning the dirty village into a romantic, fairy spot? Music, too, is such a charmer. The profane thought forgets itself, when she approaches. Through the coarse, worldly features of the sensualist glows the expression of the future angel; he looks the nobler nature which he should be, while he hearkens, spell-bound, to her melodies.

What matter, then, if Handel's "Messiah," the sublimest work of the musical art, was written for the theatre? Does it smell of the theatre now? Does it suggest tinsel and spangles, and rouge for the face, and the smoke of foot-lamps? Is it not all pregnant with celestial meaning? Does it not acquaint us with the deepest humility, the purest exaltation which the human soul has ever known? Each successive performance of that oratorio fills the hearer with new wonder. One familiar at all with the processes and difficulties of musical art, cannot but feel, as he hears it, as if an impossibility had been achieved, something greater than a mere mortal could feel it in his limited nature to do. The music seems to have come from the same inspiration with the words which it embalms. Whatever the intellect may demand, the heart asks no better interpreter of those words than this music. Indeed, it seems as if every note were set by the same necessity of an all-wise will which set the stars; as if there were no room for choice, this being *the* music pre-ordained for this theme, so there could be no other. One who has heard it often, and has it all by heart, finds those old Hebrew sentences and the melodies of the modern artist growing inseparable in his mind, as if they belonged together from the first by right, and had come to us

separately by some mistake. Had I devoted this discourse exclusively to an attempt to do justice to the Oratorio of the Messiah, I might have succeeded better in unfolding the wealth, spirituality and dignity of the musical art by that single illustration, than by all the remarks which I have scattered over so much ground. The same I might do, were there any art of congealing the fluid spirit of music into words, with some one of the great triumphs of pure, or instrumental music, some symphony of Mozart or Beethoven. But time fails.

Permit me, gentlemen and brother amateurs of a noble art, to exhort you to cherish it in the spirit of art; to strive to penetrate into its hallowed depths; and to feel that, in practising or hearing noble music, you converse with a great and gifted mind through the purest medium of communication. Music, in this sense, becomes a study, not a pastime merely; a study like poetry, or any production of the mind. It contains somewhat which concerns us deeply as immortal beings. Can you not conceive that music, as well as poetry, might have its Shakspeare? that as gifted a soul as ever came from God might utter itself in music rather than in words? and that an acquaintance with such music might give us as much insight into the great problems of the soul as the "sublime dialogues" of Plato, or the "lofty rhyme" of Dante, or of Milton? This view of the art it becomes us, as amateurs and men pretending to what is called "an education," to diffuse. While others are engaged in laudable efforts to excite an interest in the letter, the scientific rudiments of music, and are multiplying academies and singing-schools, be it ours to endeavor to bring the nobler productions of the art within the hearing of the many; to promote a taste for something more than its grammatical common-places; to make Handel, Mozart and Beethoven appreciated and felt; to give dignity to the profession of the musical artist, making it understood that he, as well as the scholar and the poet, has to do with the noblest creations of the mind, and should not be looked down upon as a mere caterer to the lowest wants of the idle. Above all, be it ours to vindicate a place for music in the circle of liberal arts here fostered by our Alma-Mater, and to purchase for this neglected art an academic sanction.

**NINTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOSTON ACADEMY OF MUSIC — 1841.**

Our notice of this document comes this time very late, yet we give it with an earnest good will towards the institution from which it has emanated, and in true gratification with its contents and conviction of their truth. The last winter has again furnished proofs that there is in the Academy a buoyant, intrinsic life, which, to our mind, confirms, more and more, the long conceived opinion that the Academy will, in some future time, successfully prove, by its whole past history, that it was just the institution we wanted. However long this period of established success may yet be distant, however much experience the Academy may yet have to gather, however much perseverance may yet be needed to lift it through the surge of public indifference, of restriction in means, and perhaps of false experiments, yet we find, in the experience of the past, especially of the past winter, the hope that it will be achieved.

At the beginning of the past season, one object of the Academy, which it had always considered as the most important and has pursued with great perseverance, had been accomplished, — access to elementary cultivation in music had been procured for every child within its reach, that came within the pale of any education. We are disposed to think with the Academy that in this country, this was truly the first thing to be done — we say in this country, because, whatever encouragement for the art we may hope for, is here to be looked for, not from privileged classes or individual patronage, but from the mass of the people, and from their true conception of its beauty and value.

This first and main object then had been accomplished; there had moreover, at the end of the previous season, been experienced much trouble among those very men on whom the Academy relied for the practical execution of their plans; differences which had not been settled, but resulted in an entire separation of the professors of the institution. Under these circumstances it was hardly to be expected that the Academy should enter upon a new object, and yet we see them quietly and perseveringly do so.

Instead of continuing their vocal concerts, in which they cannot do more or better than their neighbors, they engage the best orchestra which their means afford, and give classical instrumental concerts;

classical in the choice of the music, and classical, as far as can be, in its performance ; thus furnishing models for improving musical taste.

We look at this movement, not as an incidental or an experimental one, but as the beginning of putting into execution another branch of their plan, and which, we trust, will be followed up with perseverance and vigor. After access to the first principles of music has been opened to every body, the first care is, to put before the awakened interest and musical intellect of the people the means of elevating their conceptions of the art. For this reason the instrumental concerts — for instrumental music in its highest forms, (the Symphony, the Overture,) is best adapted to raise the pure taste for music — whoever is able to relish and enjoy it, will more easily enjoy music in its explaining connexion with words. For this reason, also, the still more direct appeal to the intellect in lectures on music, connected with its practice ; lectures which open to the audience the idea that their intellect and feelings have more to seek in music than the mere transient pleasure of the ear ; lectures which, showing the power of the art, the natural connexion of its means with the expression of passions and feelings, showing the intellectual beauties and those of expression in individual compositions, set the audience thinking about what they hear.

In this view of the Academy's operations during the past winter, — a view confirmed by the perseverance hitherto shown in the execution of their objects until they had been fully attained, — we feel confident that they will steadily pursue their new object until it is fully appreciated and enjoyed by the public, which sooner or later will be the case. We have given in this number an extract from the *Musical World*, containing an appeal for the London Philharmonic Society, and a glowing but certainly true description of the great usefulness of that Society. The same vastly important service the Academy may do to our city, by perseveringly adhering to their present plan, although we are fully aware that their task is a far more difficult one ; for while we have not an active life in art and a refined conception of it so near at hand as the English have on the continent, the idea of true art, of its true influence and effects, must yet be here fundamentally developed in the people from the very first principles, and therefore here the necessity of lectures on music, combined with its practice, is the more obvious, and the Academy proceeds correctly in entering upon both at the same time.

Thus we say with the Report, "we see no cause for despondency, but much, very much to induce a cheerful confidence in the Academy's prospects of success." Yet certainly much, very much remains still to be done. For, in order fully to reach their goal, there is one object more to be attained, one of vast magnitude and importance, one which it will require all the prudence and circumspection of the Academy successfully to enter upon, and all its perseverance through much time and exertion successfully to carry out. After the people have been introduced to the first elements of music, after they have gained an idea of its higher objects and effects and nature, they must be educated to its full enjoyment, and we trust it will become the Academy's task to train up teachers, who, themselves truly and fully initiated pupils of the art, will be able to go forth among the people, not as the mere mechanics of the art, but as its inspired followers, diffusing among them its true light and knowledge. But while we look forward to this as the great corner stone of the Academy's usefulness, we are glad to see that, with a wise moderation, they solidly rear up their building, step by step, instead of splitting their powers by undertaking too much at a time.

While we thus heartily agree with the general contents of the Report, we cannot help observing that we cannot fully concur in its concluding paragraph. That new collections of church music should appear, is but natural; for, as new churches are rising every where around us, keeping pace with the increasing population, the wants for church music are increasing in proportion. Yet we see, in what there has appeared of this kind, a less decided advance or elevation in the spirit of sacred music, than a reproduction merely in the same spirit with what there has been before, although certainly varied in form. We do moreover sincerely think it would be more compatible with the dignity and the true and permanent interest of our societies, if they would *not* shield these publications under the influence of their name, but leave them to stand upon their own merits alone.

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**HANDEL'S MESSIAH.**

(Concluded.)

Now there remained for our master only what we comprehend under the expression of "the last things:" death, resurrection, judgment, and eternal life. For this he has left the third part of his work.

A more beautiful and appropriate introduction to it, he could not have found, than the words : "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; — and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, — for now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruit of them that sleep." Handel lets the soprano voice pronounce these words in a very simple air.

It seems impossible to express the *calm* confidence, the satisfactory certainty of pious faith with more truth, and yet with so very few means. Just pronounce the first sentence with firmness and true feeling, as its contents indicate it; listen to the modulations of your voice in thus pronouncing it; and you have the theme of this air, exactly as it stands written. Everybody who knows Handel will also know that he did not mean to copy artfully the tones of the orator, as some others have done, erroneously founding upon it the original truth of music; but where the matter itself is so decided and so determined, as in this case, feeling and understanding *must* come together; for there is but one nature and *one* truth, and the greatest freedom becomes here necessity. Everything in this air is highly simple, but everything well according with the whole, and nowhere trifling; even the key is beautifully chosen; the clear, gently cheerful E major, which had hitherto not been touched upon, except — where? at : "Comfort ye my people, says your God," — and what immediately follows it in the introduction. How beautiful also the constant repetition of the very simple theme, without any embellishments by the instruments after each new phrase : "and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;" "I *know* that my Redeemer liveth," "and though worms destroy this body," "I *know* that my Redeemer liveth," — and without a weak conjunction either in word or tone. Gravely the chorus now steps unto the graves and begins a contemplation on death and resurrection : "Since man came death," — without any instruments, slow, like an old choral; then with instruments, more lively, the key changing : "by man came also the resurrection of the dead," the chorus again as before, "For as in Adam all shall die," — chorus and instruments as before, "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive!"

This short chorus is written in A minor: the orchestra follows with the chord of D major for the short, yet imposing bass recitativo : "Behold, I tell you a mystery! We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at

the last trumpet!" And now with pomp and vigor the solo trumpet begins in D the air: "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised," etc. Handel, who rarely specially marks the time, and almost never adds an adjective indicating the character of the piece, thinking that thinking musicians would find of themselves the right time and character of a piece, could not help here superscribing the words: *Pomposo ma non allegro*. Yes, truly: *pomposo!* In its expression this long air is one of the most decided and most excellent; in its form it is a monument of his times, or, if you please, a sacrifice offered to them; for to possess virtuosos on that unyielding instrument, was in those times, the glory of orchestras, especially at courts.

Handel would no doubt have been able to select sentences from the bible, describing the errors of judgment, and to represent them, a second Michael Angelo in his way, with fearful power and truth; but he declined it, and rather continued the above musical dialogue over the tombs, only in another form and more in faithful joy. The duetto: "Death is swallowed in victory. Oh death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?" consisting almost entirely in alternate questions and answers, without the accompaniment of instruments, except the evenly and seriously stepping, continuous bass; the music of which is then taken up by the chorus, and carried out with the instruments at the words: "But thanks, thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." All this forms a chef d'œuvre of the feeling, and profound musical artist. You must feel astonished at the treasures, which Handel's knowledge and ability in counterpoint has strown out here so richly, without any seeming intention or desire to write for the understanding alone. Those who have once penetrated all the art and the beauties of this piece, will surely never forget it.

The same must be said of the air: "If God is for us, who can be against us? who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth! It is Christ who makes intercession for us," &c. Here the interest, the point of attraction, does not rest on the skilful combination, for it is hardly possible to write more simple than Handel has done here. The air moves evenly, from beginning to end, in its quarter and eighth notes; it does hardly ever leave the key of G minor, the figures are rather obsolete, the harmony is noble, yet empty. It is solely and entirely the spirit of the air, immediately sprung from the depth of a soul, full of the subject, that

moves and charms us, leading us directly to where we are meant to be led. We have seen the following remark in a journal : "when I heard this air for the first time, I felt as on the day when I first partook of the Lord's Supper."

This is the object, the result of the redemption ; it is the true state of the soul of the redeemed ; and the master had finished his work, except to crown it at the conclusion by the high word of praise from all the generations of the earth now joined with the heavenly hosts : " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c. This is a chorus worthy of the " Hallelujah ! " yet (and how judicious that is !) less brilliant and joyful, but more solemn, with more concentrated power, and therefore in more simple masses and in stricter forms of the art. This truly great and powerful piece consists of two chorusses connected with each other. The first contains the words : " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." These words are sung first in slow, solemn chords, then a little livelier, first with merely supporting instruments, then with freer figures in the accompaniment. Then the lower voices and the instrumental basses begin unisono, rather slower again, with full vigor, *merely* to exclaim : " Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him, that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." Soprano and altos repeat it in the same manner with the violins ; and this simple melody gives the double theme, from which this glorious chorus is built up in all its breadth and variety. There is an astonishing richness in the change and the skilful combination of the parts of these two principal subjects ; the stringed instruments go with the voices and the others are silent, until at last all these changes and interruptions cease, all becoming one triumphant song, in which suddenly the whole hitherto retained mass of the orchestra joins in free, independent figures. All the parts remain together, the singers now and then joining in the single exclamations of " blessing " — " glory " — " honor " — " and power " — " for ever " — " for ever " — " for ever " — and now follows the great vocal fugue " Amen," putting on the work its glorious crown, which is least subject to a particular period and its prevailing taste. The effect which this fugue is intended to produce, is fully produced with every hearer. To show, in detail, the great art of learned harmony in this piece, from which a complete theory of the fugue might be deduced, would lead us beyond the limits of our present object.

We have followed, in text and music, the original composition of Handel. It is not published in Germany, but only Mozart's arrangement of it, which, as far as we know, has been used in all public performances of the Oratorio. Mozart undertook this arrangement by order of the Baron von Swieten in Vienna, a very influential amateur; and this order was given with the express direction, to bring the work as near as possible to the taste of the present times (that is to his times, about forty years ago), especially in regard to the great progress of instrumental music. Mozart accomplished this work in his own manner; that is with his rich mind, exact knowledge of all the means, and perfect skill in their use. He also kept the original, which he, during his whole lifetime, enthusiastically honored and loved, as entire and inviolate as he thought he could without neglecting the object of his arranging it. He did not take anything from the choruses, and did not alter anything in them, except that which, by adding a richer instrumentation, became of itself altered. He in part shortened the airs; by increased and often admirably and most skilfully employed instruments, he gave them, individually considered, generally a much greater interest and attraction. But—and that is the evil—by this very means they became in part something very different from what they were meant to be according to Handel's plan, directed as it was to the whole as a whole. The same must be said even of some of the choruses thus arranged. In one word, individual pieces, considered as such, gained much; but the whole suffered, and suffered sometimes in its most essential character, in its connection and gradation. We admire, we praise the art and the care bestowed upon the work by the modern master; yet we feel every where, that every period has its own character, and that we should leave to each its character, and that, if we mix these individual traits of different periods together, we can never obtain perfect unity. Where Handel's *Messiah* is therefore not to be performed entire, but as is often done, in separate sections, each of them forming a sort of sacred cantata, it might be well, or at least would do no harm to take Mozart's arrangement; but where the whole is performed, and—this must be considered—where there is an organist capable of that old manner of accompanying, in which Handel himself, even as a blind old man, used to accompany his oratorios on the organ, and in which the organ took, besides what is still its part, that which is now given to the wind instruments; where they have not exactly solo passage, there, I think, the original should be retained as the author wrote it.

## THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY, LONDON.

We all now know and love the instrumental music of Mozart and Beethoven; we have all long since enshrined its mighty authors among our household gods; in fact, by habit, so completely are their works identified with our notions of delight that we can scarcely persuade ourselves that there ever was a time when England knew them not; or when her musicians could not, if so minded, imbibe a fresh stimulant to their ambition with the divine strains of the *Jupiter* or the *Pastorale*. Yet such a time of darkness was there here long after the light had dawned upon our continental brethren — in such a time did the Philharmonic arise — and to that Philharmonic, now threatened with destruction, are we all positively indebted for that knowledge and love which we now possess. For many years after the society's foundation it possessed the only orchestra in this country capable of executing the great instrumental music of Germany. The modern symphony was then almost an object of awe to the English musician; it was something to which he listened with a kind of reverence, but to which — dissident from inexperience and consciously wanting refined art and feeling — he could then scarcely hope to create a parallel. It came upon him as a new order of musical things; unfolding to his contemplation fresh powers in one composer whose vocal writings he had already known, and offering to his familiar acquaintance another and a greater, of whose very existence he was till then all but unconscious. To the great orchestral works of Mozart and Beethoven the Philharmonic afterwards added those of Spohr in its performances; thus introducing to the artist's admiration a new phasis of musical beauty, in peculiarity of school and the utmost refinement of instrumentation. The example thus nobly set, in defiance of the difficulties of a novel style of performance, and the outcries of musty prejudice against "innovations" on the prescriptive right to dullness then enjoyed by English professors, was speedily followed. The ice was broken; and the genial warmth of true inspiration being allowed access to English hearts, its effects were speedily visible in the gradual spread of the new light to the remotest parts of the country. The great works first introduced by the Philharmonic began to be generally known; by their aid a new impulse has been given to musical thought — they have been studied in the musician's solitude — they have become the text-books on

which he is taught instrumental composition in its vastness and sublimity — they have been consecrated as patterns for imitation which, we may now proudly boast, have not been held up in vain. And, as a result, in what state do we now find this country? Instead of, as then, possessing but one competent orchestra and a few inditers of common-place glees, Vauxhall-ballads, and trumpery overtures to match, she has now in every considerable town a band capable of respectfully performing anything that may be put before them, and a race of young and enthusiastic artists whose genius has been cultivated to the production of works which, if they do not rival those of their giant teachers, may at least fairly challenge Europe, at this day, in a struggle for supremacy. All things, then, impartially considered, we do not overrate the past importance of the Philharmonic Society in stating that to its influence is, circuitously, perhaps, but still mainly, ascribable the high pretensions of English musical art at the present time.

But suppose the period of the Philharmonic's existence to be accomplished — suppose that, after another season of ill success, it be finally relinquished; whither are we to look for a renewal of the advantages which we have hitherto enjoyed? Who among us will be found prepared with skill and courage to undertake the care, the responsibility, and the years of patient labor, necessary to work up a new society to the state of importance and pecuniary effectiveness possessed even by the now waning Philharmonic? Will not one year of adverse fortune deter the speculators from advance with visions of ruin? Has not the Society of British Musicians been compelled, through indiscreet management and want of patronage — in other words, *money* — to suspend its concerts, and will not the same fate attend any similar undertaking? Too great reason have we to anticipate that in this will, for the thousandth time, be illustrated the warning truth that it is far easier to destroy a great edifice than to rebuild it. Again, it must not be forgotten that, in the death of the Philharmonic, we lose one main stay of our school for orchestral instrumentalists, who (performers on wind-instruments especially) have not the means of income in teaching possessed by other classes of professors. To great and established concertos like the Philharmonic, must such men principally look for support, and, on the other hand, great concertos cannot exist without them; — they and concert-music are thus reciprocally dependent. As a proof of how small is the encouragement held out for devoting a life to practice

of this kind, it may not be irrelevant to state, on unquestionable authority, that the income of the late Mr. Willman — reputedly the best clarinet-player in England — never exceeded three hundred pounds per annum! — and miserably small as this is, what prospect remains of continuing a race of competent artists, should such a support as the Philharmonic crumble from beneath their feet, without the hope of another's arising promptly to supply the deficiency?

Let us be wise in our generation. We have got a noble institution — faulty, doubtless, through the corruption of time, but, at any rate, *existing*; — let us correct it if we can, but, at all events, let us preserve it. It has assuredly neglected its duty to Englishmen in its chary encouragement of their works, it has become somewhat profuse in its repetitions, and it has yielded undue homage to fashionable singers and fashionable music; we may tax it with all these, and perhaps more delinquencies, but let us not forget that it is yet the *Philharmonic*, and that if we lose it, we shall not, with all its faults, speedily create another at all comparable to it. It now hangs on public opinion, swayed as that always is by the private expressions of artists, and to them, therefore, we would point out the danger of likening themselves to certain political reformers who overthrow and demolish a building while professing but to remove the mass which defaces its walls. [Musical World.]

### THE LIFE OF A COMPOSER, AN ARABESQUE.

BY CARL MARIA VON WEBER.

[Continued from page 252.]

Harlequin again came forward quite enraptured, and addressed the public: —

Yes, Melody will ever bear the bell!  
By that alone true genius we tell.  
By her own native beauty she is sure  
Thro' every change of fashion to endure;  
Hence every tailor, every stable-boy,  
Her worth can value, and her charms enjoy;  
Hence airs, duets, terzettts, of every kind,  
So seize the ear, and fascinate the mind,

That at each corner, and in every street,  
Old favorites are sure our ears to greet.  
And oh ! how vast her magic, when we find  
In the grand opera these charms combined,  
Ah when the heroes sing, and singing die,  
Who does not long to share their destiny !

As to our German opera — if, forsooth,  
I am permitted to speak out the truth, —  
Our cold composers too much learning boast,  
And while they calculate, all beauty's lost.  
Their dreaded idol is the singer's throat,  
To that they offer incense; every note,  
Each nicely weighed and calculated tone,  
Is sacrificed to that, and that alone.  
Nor is this all — but you 'll excuse my naming  
A hundred other faults there 's cause for blaming.

The Opera before you seeks to please  
On broader, nobler principles than these.  
For instance — as the piece was first design'd,  
The best air to the Hero was assign'd;  
But the proud *Prima Donna* waxing jealous  
At such a preference given to the fellows,  
In furious mood arose, and flatly swore,  
That if she sang not that, she'd sing no more.  
And what does the composer ? — bows assent,  
*Adopts* the air, and Madame is content.  
Nay, should the very air the *Basso* tries  
Please the fair dame, she pounces on the prize ;  
Yet, after all, what more does she require  
Than that the piece be raised just five notes higher ?  
Does the composer make a needless brawl,  
And by his obstinacy ruin all ?  
He 's no such fool — but gladly changes key,  
Time, accent, all — to please the reigning she !  
The town applauds — why not ? Such transpositions,  
Are far beneath its critical suspicions ?

Yes, my good Sirs, the main, the only thing,  
An audience asks is — does the music sing ?  
If it sing well, what matter where it go,  
Whether to G in alt, or D below ;  
Or who the singer, Titus' self, or Nero,  
Nay, whether man or brute, a bear, or hero,  
If it but sing, and singing please the ear ?  
This is the truth, Sirs, nought on earth more clear.  
Say what you will of science or of art,  
The ear, the ear 's the passage to the heart.

Thence I proclaim it, as I say farewell,  
 The Italian Opera still shall bear the bell !  
 This is my creed from which I ne'er shall sever,  
 Viva ! the Italian Opera for ever !  
 It is with me the prophets and the law,  
 I care not for aught else a single straw.

He makes his exit, and the Grand French Opera appears in the person of a Parisian dame of high birth. She wears the buskin, and treads with easy dignity, though somewhat incommoded by her Grecian drapery.

She is constantly surrounded by the *Corps de Ballet*, while a number of mythological beings are seen in the back ground. The action lies between twelve and one at noon.

## ACT I.

*La Princesse.* Cher Prince, ou nous unit.

*Le Prince.* J'en suis ravi, Princesse.

Peuple, chantez, dansez, montrez votre allegresse.  
*Chœur.*

Chantons, dansons, montrons notre allegresse.

[End of the First Act.]

## ACT II.

*La Princesse.* Amour !

[A warlike tumult is heard. She swoons. The prince appears surrounded by his foes, and fighting with desperation. He is mortally wounded.

*La Prince.* Cher Prince !

*Le Pr.* Helas !

*La Prince.* Quoi ?

*Le Pr.* J'expire !

*La Prince.* O malheur !

Peuple, chantez, dansez, montrez votre douleur.  
*Chœur.*

Chantons, dansons, montrons notre douleur.

[A march closes the Second Act.]

## ACT III.

(Pallas appears in the Clouds.)

*Pal.* Pallas te rend le jour.

*La Prince.* Ah, quel moment !

*Le Pr.* Ou suis-je ?

Peuple, chantez, dansez, celebrez ce prodige !  
*Chœur.*

Dansons, chantons, celebrons ce prodige.

[Tableaux—End of Act the Third.]

Harlequin again appears, and assuming an imposing attitude, declaims the following in a pompous manner : —

Come, fierce declamation ; come rant, and fume, and passion,  
Nothing else will serve us now, you alone are all the fashion ;  
All feeling appears tame, and all passion seems at fault,  
If the singer does not rave and scream all his part in alt.  
Come, boldly mount aloft, and fear not, my noble bass,  
The tenor will not be outdone, he'll find his proper place.  
Come, boldly mount aloft, good dame Nature must give way ;  
Effect is all we want, and we'll have it, come what may.  
Let the dancer be your model, see how brisk he bounds on high,  
How he springs aloft in air, nay, does every thing but fly ;  
If you follow not his footsteps, and that too in quick progression,  
He will beat you in the race, will outdo you in expression ;  
For fine feeling now-a-days in a *pirouette* is found,  
And in an *entrechat* much deep pathos may abound.  
To dance and sing, and sing and dance, is now, Sir, all the rage,  
There's nothing else has power fix'd attention to engage.  
My friend, if your orchestra would hit off the ruling taste,  
With a *quantum sus.* of trumpets and trombones be it grac'd ;  
If in every other bar you but change your modulation,  
You will hit the true expedient of starting into fashion.  
Who asks for sense or reason, if a show of learning's found,  
And difficulties strange and new at every step abound.  
Of oboes, clarinets, and flutes, employ as full a store  
As would have formerly supplied three operas or more ;  
Your basses turn to violins, your violins like mad  
Must rant and tear ; nay, never spare ; effect, Sir, must be had,  
Let the great drum in thunder come, to fill each languid pause —  
Noise is your reign, your true domain, — then re-assert your cause.

[*Harlequin makes his exit in character.*]

A pause ensues : the public gradually becomes restless. The pause continues ; signs of disapprobation begin to manifest themselves, and at length break forth in good earnest. The German Opera seems disinclined to make her appearance. The tumult increases ; the manager is in the greatest embarrassment ; at length Harlequin reappears in a state of exhaustion, and thus begins : — “ Ladies and gentlemen, pardon me if I have not time to compress into a few words what I am called upon to say upon the spur of the moment. I am unable to comprehend the cause of your displeasure ; why attempt to prejudge our efforts for your entertainment ? Where is your usual patience, which the merest promise has so often sufficed to satisfy ?

You imagine, I suppose, that your privileges are infringed. Well, as you have been made to wait, it is but just on your part to require a reason for your waiting.

"To be candid then, the German Opera goes on but very so so ; she has been so crippled of late that it is impossible to bring her fairly upon her legs again. Many have been doing their endeavors to bolster her up, but all to no purpose. She has become so swollen and deformed, that no dress will fit her. Many have been the attempts to remedy this defect, sometimes by means of French, at others of Italian dresses ; but all to no purpose ; nothing could be more clumsy than these endeavors. At last, a few romantic tailors have hit upon the expedient of choosing genuine homespun materials, and of fashioning them according to the taste and fancy of other nations, without however adopting their extravagances.

"But hark ! even now the thunder rolls above our heads ; they are about to commence."

*(He retires quite exhausted, and mutters to himself in going.)*

"To a poetical Harlequin like myself, what a nuisance is this confounded prose ! "

A solemn silence and general expectation now prevail.

#### AGNES BERNAUERIN.

A romantic national Melodrama. Dramatis Personæ — as many as necessary. Scene, the Heart of Germany.

FIRST SCENE — Scenic transformation.

#### SECOND SCENE.

*Agnes.* Alas ! my soul is enfeebled and my spirits spent.

*Brunhilde.* O, mistress, attempt not to fathom the unfathomable depths of human sufferings. If you noble ladies take it into your heads to fall in love with misery and distress, will you excuse us for our dulness in not being so susceptible.

*Agnes.* Come to the castle garden : the gloom of its bower will better accord with the gloomy anticipation of my destiny, for it is necessary that I should anticipate it. [Exit.

*Scene changes. Duke and Followers.*

*Duke.* Sir Knight, follow me to the castle-hall ; there, amidst the festive pomp, shall she give you her hand. Should she refuse, deep in the gloom of the donjon keep shall vipers and serpents, according to custom — you understand me — [Exit.

*Scene changes. Albrecht appears.*

*Albrecht.* Caspar, follow me.

*Scene changes. A Spirit appears in a warning Attitude.*

*Albrecht.* Who art thou, mysterious being?

*Spirit.* I have power to do all things. Hasten, noble youth; fear not; depend upon it I shall save you. Away—

*Albrecht.* To save her or to die!

(*Two Minstrels appear.*)

*Minstrels.* Wait noble lord; we can sing to you the history of all this.

TRANSFORMATIONS. Finale.

[Rocky forest scenery. To the left, in the background, a Castle; opposite a Vineyard, more in front, a Hermit's Cell. To the left, in the foreground, a Cavern, somewhat further, a Bower; in the centre two hollow trees, further on a Subterranean Passage.]

Hermit enters singing a prayer. Agnes sings an air in the Castle, united with which is a chorus of vintagers from the opposite side. Albrecht is seen slumbering in the bower, and sings in his dream in interrupted tones. Caspar, through fear, sings a polonaise from the hollow trees. Robbers in the cavern sing a wild chorus. Protecting Genii hover in the air over Albrecht. Various noises are heard from behind the scenes. Warlike tumult. A distant march from the opposite side — of course these are all thunderbolts together. Two thunderbolts fall at opposite sides, and are heard to crash something or other.

All. Ha! (*The curtain falls.*)

ACT II.

A FUNERAL MARCH. (*Agnes is conducted over the bridge of Straubing; in the middle of the bridge her clothes are caught by a nail, and she is left hanging over the stream.*)

*Albrecht enters with Travellers.*

[Here an occasional air is introduced.

(*Recit.*) Hasten, my friends, lose not a single moment;  
If we delay she may be lost for ever!  
Swear!

*Chorus.* We swear.

*Albrecht.* O oath!

ALLEGRO.

Though rocks should oppose me,  
Though seas should enclose me,  
I never would waver,  
But hasten to save her.  
See Fate threats to sever  
Her life-thread, but never  
That prize shall he get:  
Ah grave! thou art waiting  
To take this sweet bait in;  
But she'll cheat thee yet.

## ARIOSO.

O sweet little flower,  
Though Fate o'er thee lower,  
Yet soon shall my power  
Restore thee,  
And o'er thee  
Raise up thy fallen bower.

*Chorus.* See the hero wildly raving !

*Albrecht.* See the maid his succor craving !

In solemn mood, how I delight  
To trace the passions' mystic flight  
As o'er my soul they dance in turn,  
While now I freeze, and now I burn.

## PIU STRETTO.

But I will not waver,  
I'll hasten to save her.

*Chorus.* Hasten !

*Albrecht.* I never will waver.

*Chorus.* No !

*Albrecht.* I hasten to save her,  
To save her I hasten,  
I hasten to save her !

(On the word Save, a cadence of a quarter of an hour.)

*Chorus.* On to death or victory.

(They all swim through the water ; the Chancellor dashes out his brains against a stake at the water's side : Albrecht rushes in with his Mistress in his arms ; enter the Duke in a rage.) Albrecht exclaims Father !

(The Duke is instantly touched, and blesses the kneeling pair.)

## FINAL CHORUS.

This bridge, an arch of glory  
Shall flourish famed in story.  
Now is an end of grief and pain,  
And everything's set right again.

*End of the Drama.*

(To be continued.)

## ROSSINI.

It is said that Rossini has just made to his native town the munificent present of 60,000f. to found a charitable establishment for old and infirm musicians. It is added that he intends to establish there a public and gratuitous school for singing, the direction of which he will reserve to himself for life.